

## First record of the Striped Manakin *Machaeropterus regulus* in Guyana

by David J. Agro & Robert S. Ridgely

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While examining specimens in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP), we were surprised to find a specimen of *Machaeropterus regulus* that, for over 100 years, had been incorrectly identified as a Tiny Tyrant-Manakin *Tyrannneutes virescens*. This specimen represents the first and, to our knowledge, only record of *M. regulus* for Guyana.

The Striped Manakin *Machaeropterus regulus* is an uncommon to locally fairly common bird of humid forest and mature secondary woodland in much of northern and northwestern South America; an isolated population occurs in eastern Brazil (Ridgely & Tudor 1994). The species has not been recorded in northeastern South America (e.g. no records from Guyana: Chubb 1921, Snyder 1966; Surinam: Haverschmidt & Mees 1994; French Guiana: Tostain *et al.* 1992). Apart from the isolated Brazilian population, the previous easternmost record was from Río Surukún (La Faisca) at the headwaters of the Río Caroní in southern Bolívar, Venezuela (Phelps & Phelps 1950).

The specimen (ANSP 51442) is a female collected by Henry Whitely Jr. (1844–1893) on 10 October 1890 near Ourumee in what was then British Guiana. Ourumee is another name for the Merumé Mountains, 5°48'N; 60°6'W (Stephens & Taylor 1985). Based on range, we have tentatively assigned this specimen to *M. r. aureopectus*, a subspecies described by Phelps Gillard (1941) on the basis of a single male from Kabadiscaña in southern Bolívar, Venezuela.

Although *M. regulus* is difficult to see, it should be easily detected in the field by its calls. A number of observers (RSR, Mark, B. Robbins, Tristan J. Davis, Davis Finch), who are familiar with these calls, have visited potentially suitable areas for *M. regulus* in Guyana over the past five years without reporting this species. This suggests that *M. regulus* is local and rare in Guyana, but observers should be aware that it could occur elsewhere in the Guianas.

This observation was made in connection with our recent fieldwork in Guyana for the Iwokrama Faunal Survey made possible through the support of the Government of Guyana, the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, and the University of Guyana. We thank Graham G. Watkins for his help in coordinating the Academy's field activities in Guyana, Vicki Funk and the Smithsonian Institution's Biodiversity of the Guianas Program for its support in Georgetown, and Sally B. Conyne and Leo Joseph for their suggestions in preparing the manuscript.

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## The first documented nest and eggs of *Merops muelleri mentalis*

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Gatter (1988) noted that the Blue-headed Bee-eater *Merops muelleri mentalis* is a resident breeder of Liberia. That status was assumed since the nests or eggs of the Upper Guinea subspecies had never been found. Gatter (1988) also listed *M. m. mentalis* in a category for which all possible information about the species in Liberia is needed.

Nests and eggs of the Lower Guinea subspecies, *M. m. muelleri*, have been found on three occasions (Bannerman 1955, Fry 1984, Fry *et al.* 1992). These nests were described as 55–60 cm deep burrows with terminal, oval, unlined egg chambers. Nests were found in a roadside bank, in the wall of a sawyer pit in Cameroon, and along a forest path in Gabon. One nest from Cameroon contained eggs in January, and nestlings in February (Fry *et al.* 1992). In Gabon, nest building began in October and young fledged in February. Eggs from Cameroon were described as white and subspherical, measuring  $23.2 \times 20.1$  and  $23.7 \times 20.0$  mm (Fry *et al.* 1988).

*M. m. mentalis* was first recorded in Liberia at Mount Nimba by Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1965). During their studies 10 specimens were obtained, none were in breeding condition, but females in August and September with ovaries measuring 7 mm might have been approaching breeding condition. Birds captured in July were in the middle to late stages of wing moult, indicating they might have just finished nesting.

A nest of *Merops muelleri mentalis* was found on 8 March 1990 by MFC while walking along a shallow, mostly dry stream bed. The stream bank was c. 30 cm tall and was probably within 3 km of shallow running water but none was seen in the immediate area. The habitat was primary semi-deciduous rainforest with a canopy approaching 25 m in height and a dense growth of understory trees near the stream

bed. The nest locality was c. 11 km north of Zigida (Lofa County) at 540 m in the Lofa Mountains of northern Liberia.

The nest burrow was in a gently sloping portion of a sandy bank c. 45 cm above a small pool of water. It was c. 40 cm deep with a 45 mm opening. A bird flew from the burrow and perched in the lower limbs of an understory tree allowing close observation and positive identification. The two eggs were subspherical, cream-white (speckled brown from earth), and both measured  $22.5 \times 18.0$  mm; they were unincubated. They have been deposited in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Details accord closely with nests and eggs of the nominate race, but the Liberian nest was in a gently sloping (not steep) bank, and its burrow was shallower. Nests of most bee-eater species vary in burrow depth and site characteristics (Fry *et al.* 1992).

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## Monotypy of *Francolinus griseostriatus*

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The Grey-striped Francolin *Francolinus griseostriatus* is one of a suite of species endemic to the escarpment zone of western Angola, where it occurs in two apparently disjunct populations, a northern one extending from Cuanza Norte and Malanje to Cuanza Sul, and a southern one confined (after a boundary extension that embraced northern Huila) to the province of Benguela (Hall 1961, 1963, Pinto 1983, Urban *et al.* 1986).